

LABOR DAY WEEKEND COASTAL RIP CURRENT SAFETY ALERT





Weekend NOAA Forecast

LONG TERM /THURSDAY THROUGH MONDAY/ MONDAY...THURSDAY FORECAST HIGHLY DEPENDING ON THE TRACK AND SIZE OF EARL AS IT MAKES ITS CLOSEST APPROACH TO THE COAST DURING THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING. AT BEST AS THE STORM PASSES JUST OVER 300 MILES EAST OF THE COAST SOME OF THE CIRrus OUTFLOW PASSES OVER MAINLY NC ZONES. A TRACK FURTHER WEST WOULD OBVIOUSLY IMPLY MORE CLOUDINESS AND SOME MORE WIND OVER LAND AND EVEN THE CHANCE FOR A SQUALLY OUTER RAINBAND SUCH AS THAT IMPLIED BY THE 00Z GFS AND TO A LESSER EXTEND THE ECMWF (BOTH OF WHICH REPRESENT LARGE WESTWARD SHIFTS FROM PREVIOUS RUNS). **MOST OF THE EFFECTS, FOR NOW, APPEAR TO BE CONFINED TO MARINE/BEACH ENVIRONMENT WITH LARGE WAVES/STRONG RIPS RESPECTIVELY.** REST OF FORECAST THINKING REMAINS UNCHANGED. FRIDAY ANOTHER HOT DAY WITH A LATE DAY OR NIGHTTIME FROPA DEVOID OF ANY REAL RAIN CHANCES.



Past weekend coastal news

CAROLINA BEACH, NC (WECT)- Although Hurricane Earl is nowhere near Southeastern North Carolina right now, Hurricane Danielle is making herself felt in the coastal waters. Lifeguards say some of our beaches are experiencing some of the roughest rip currents they have seen in a long time. There were several swimmers who had to be rescued by lifeguards after they nearly drowned in the rough water conditions. Dewayne Jesup was out in the water for just a few minutes but had to swim back in after losing control. "It's really terrible, knocking you upside the head," said Jesup. "It's worse than being in a fight. It's like being in a boxing ring. It's terrible." Lifeguards rescued 50 swimmers on Saturday, and by early Sunday, already handled a major rescue. Now they say, their best defense is to keep people out of the water. Zachary Hodge with the Carolina Beach Ocean Rescue was on duty today. He warns beach goers to be extra careful this weekend. "Even if you're in the water just up to your knees, if a swimmer loses their footing they can get into places they don't necessarily want to be," said Hodge. Even surfers, who are some of the most experienced swimmers, are entering the water with caution. Matthew Hernandez is one of them. "It can knock the wind out of you and you can get a mouth full of water," said Hernandez.



Rip Current Safety Tips

When at the beach:

- Whenever possible, **swim at a lifeguard-protected beach.**
- Never swim alone.
- Learn how to swim in the surf. It's not the same as swimming in a pool or lake.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches. If in doubt, don't go out.
- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards. Lifeguards are trained to identify potential hazards. Ask a lifeguard about the conditions before entering the water. This is part of their job.
- Stay at least 100 feet away from piers and jetties. Permanent rip currents often exist along side these structures.
- Consider using polarized sunglasses when at the beach. They will help you to spot signatures of rip currents by cutting down glare and reflected sunlight off the ocean's surface.
- Pay especially close attention to children and elderly when at the beach. Even in shallow water, wave action can cause loss of footing.



If caught in a RIP

- **If caught in a rip** to conserve energy and think clearly.
- Never fight **current**:
- Remain calm against the current.
- Think of it like a treadmill that cannot be turned off, which you need to step to the side of.
- Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline.
When out of the current, swim at an angle--away from the current--towards shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself by waving your arm and yelling for help.



If you see someone in trouble, don't become a victim too:

- Get help from a lifeguard.
- If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1.
- Throw the rip current victim something that floats--a lifejacket, a cooler, an inflatable ball.
- Yell instructions on how to escape.
- Remember, **many people drown while trying to save someone else from a rip current.**

RIP CURRENTS

Break the Grip of the Rip!



IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT

- ◆ Don't fight the current
- ◆ Swim out of the current, then to shore
- ◆ If you can't escape, float or tread water
- ◆ If you need help, call or wave for assistance

SAFETY

- ◆ Know how to swim
- ◆ Never swim alone
- ◆ If in doubt, don't go out

More information about rip currents can be found at the following web sites:

www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov
www.usfa.org



Real Life Story: Kathryn T. Graham

I was at Wrightsville Beach, NC, 7 years ago (I think) and a hurricane was blowing up the coast. It was the day before they evacuated the beach because Cape Fear was in the path of a hurricane eye. The seas were higher than normal, but still very swimmable. I grew up swimming in the ocean and am very comfortable in it. I know about rip currents and fortunately, had learned what to do if I ever got caught. One of my favorite past times in the ocean is diving under breakers and floating over swells. That afternoon, I dove under a wave as I have done countless times, but when I surfaced and looked back over my shoulder, I was way out from the shore. I knew immediately what had happened. I tried swimming parallel to the shore, but was still in a very strong current and began to tire quickly. Then a wave broke over my head, and I felt the panic rising. I know that panic is one's worst enemy in the water, so I floated and treaded water for a few minutes to catch my breath and relax. I could see my family on the shore trying to spot me in the water, but the swells were too big for them to see me waving. Once when I looked out to sea to keep an eye on the swells so I wouldn't be caught unawares again, I realized that just a little further out, there were surfers. Suddenly the light bulb went off in my head. Instead of trying to make it back to shore on my own, I turned and swam further out to where they were. I told them what had happened and asked if one of them would allow me to accompany him into shore using his board as a boogie board for both of us. Of course, one of them agreed. It took both of us to get far enough away from the current so we could paddle back into shore. I feel very fortunate that I recognized what had happened, knew not to panic, and was able to find a solution. Every kid who swims in the ocean should be taught this so you will have an endless supply of Real Life Story, not a list of death statistics. As for myself, I still love the ocean and swim in it every chance I get.

Educational Websites

<http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov/forecasts.shtml>

<http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov/tips.shtml>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=AU&hl=en-GB&v=-hCZuYzNujI>

<http://www.wect.com/Global/story.asp?S=13063045>